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Death threats / Fear for safety

15 June 1995

COLOMBIA

Carlos Emilio Ramirez Montoya, radiologist

Carlos Emilio Ramirez Montoya has been subjected to telephoned death threats, following recent press articles in which he is accused of being a member of the guerrilla group, the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army. There are serious fears for his safety as such accusations are often followed by "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution.

Carlos Emilio Ramirez, a radiologist working in Cucutá, department of Norte de Santander, denounced the threats to the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, the Office of the People's Advocate, on 2 May 1995. According to his denunciation, the press articles appeared in two national magazines published on 20 March and on 28 March. The first claims that he was in charge of coordinating terrorist activities in Venezuela on behalf of the ELN, while the second article, which appeared in a different magazine, claims that he was a guerrilla collaborator.

Carlos Emilio Ramirez stated that he has learned that the intelligence services have accused him of collaborating with guerrilla forces, treating wounded and sick guerrillas, being a guerrilla ideologue, and managing guerrilla funds abroad. He is reportedly now being kept under constant surveillance by security force agents, some of whom have identified themselves as members of the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS), Civilian Security Department.

Between September 1988 until October 1990 Carlos Emilio Ramirez took part in regional peace talks between guerrilla forces and the governor of the department of Norte of Santander.

Human rights organizations are to petition President Ernesto Samper Pizano, urging that measures be taken to guarantee Carlos Emilio Ramirez's safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, has made repeated promises, both during his election campaign and since taking office, to improve the human rights situation in Colombia.

Despite these pledges, members of the Colombian and security forces, together with their paramilitary allies, continue to commit serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances" and torture with virtual impunity. Political and civic activists are often labelled guerrilla sympathizers, an accusation frequently followed them becoming the victims of human rights violations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern at intimidation and death threats against Carlos Emilio Ramirez Montoya;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough investigation into these threats, the results of which should be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take all the necessary steps, deemed appropriate by Carlos Emilio Ramirez, to ensure his safety.

APPEALS TO1. President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2. Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 346 1225

Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

3. Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Apartado Aéreo 29855
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Fiscal General Valdivieso, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 211 6676 or 288 2828 (taped voice, then short delay before fax tone)

Salutation: Estimado Valdivieso/Dear Dr. Valdivieso

4. Procurator General:

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Vasquez, Bogotá, Colombia

**Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723 (taped office sounds, then engaged signal, then fax tone)
 / 281 7531 / 284 0472**

Salutation:Sr.Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados
 AA 44456
 Santafé de Bogotá
 Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 1995.